

reduce the risk of accidents which could cause large-scale danger to human life. In the Canadian view, it is important that a legal regime be established for nuclear power sources to ensure that their use is for the benefit and not to the detriment of mankind. With this in mind, Canada has proposed four areas for initial study in the Legal Sub-Committee:

- 1) the requirement that prior to launch, the launching state provide notification concerning satellites carrying nuclear power sources;
- 2) the obligation to provide early warning of possible re-entry of satellites containing nuclear power sources;
- 3) the question of emergency assistance; and
- 4) the establishment of standards relating to radiation exposure levels.

Although these proposals receive the support of most members of the Legal Sub-Committee at its meeting in New York in April 1979, opposition by the Soviet Union and some others, who contended that the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee should complete its work before the Legal Sub-Committee considered the matter, successfully prevented the subject from being added by the Sub-Committee to its 1980 agenda as a separate item. (This results from the fact that the Outer Space Committee and its Sub-Committees operate on the principle of consensus, which is considered to be the most appropriate procedure since any proposal approved by these bodies would be meaningless in practical terms without agreement by the space powers.)

At the UNCOPUOS session in New York, the Soviets reversed themselves and agreed to the addition of an agenda for the Legal Sub-Committee specifically on nuclear power sources, following bilateral discussions with the Canadian delegation and in light of continuing strong support for the proposal by other members of the Committee. The somewhat convoluted wording approved by the UNCOPUOS for the Legal Sub-Committee's agenda is as follows: "Review of Existing International Law Relevant to Outer Space Activities with a View to Determining the Appropriateness of Supplementing Such Law with Provisions Relating to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space". The